

A LUCKY BLACK GROUSE.

HOW A RUSSIAN EXILE SECURED MUCH VALUED PRIVILEGES.

A Present to the Wife of a Hard Hearted Official Wins His Favor—Leaves from the Reminiscences of Count Adolf Norrkow.

[Special Correspondence.]
New York, Oct. 10.—It was in the year 1871 that the minister of interior sent orders to the governor of the province of Archangel, which he in turn communicated to the ispravnik (chief of police) to have me returned under guard to Petersburg; there to await the further disposition of my case. I was to journey to the capital city in the company of a number of exiles, who, having served out their terms in the prisons of the province, were to be sent to help colonize Siberia. It was a rather roundabout way in which to reach their destination, but they were forced to proceed in this way from the fact that at that time no state prisons existed along what would be their line of march across the northern part of the Russian possessions.



THE BIRD SAVED HIM.

Thus, to reach Siberia they were compelled to return to Petersburg and take up their journey from that place. The exiles travel slowly, never more than twenty-five versts being passed in one day, and every fourth day is devoted entirely to rest. It is only at every fourth station that an etape office is found, and these are the resting places. At the other stations the gendarmes who accompany the exiles perform the part of that official. I soon became weary of this slow, monotonous way of traveling, and the prisons where we were forced to sleep were such foul smelling, ill ventilated places that I felt I would soon fall ill if I continued to occupy them. The prisons are cleaned but once a year, and the accumulation of filth and vermin found in them is simply appalling. The walls and floor are damp and altogether unfit for human habitation.

My only hope in bettering my condition lay in finding some means of separating from the exiles. This I could only do by feigning sickness and letting the others proceed without me. Twenty-four hours after their departure found me convalescent and ready to resume my journey. As a man of rank, by law I was entitled to the privilege of one horse, and by the kindness of the etape officer I was enabled to obtain a second horse for the use of the gendarme who accompanied me. Thus equipped, I had no difficulty in overtaking the party on foot, in addition to passing three etape stations in twenty-four hours. At the last of these I decided to spend the night, as I was becoming exhausted from hard riding. When about to resume my journey in the morning I was informed by the etape officer that I would find much difficulty in passing the official at my next halting place, without experiencing considerable delay, as he would in all probability detain me until the party from which I had parted would reach there. He said the officer at that station was an old soldier, one of the guards of the time of Nicholas I, and a man known throughout the country for his brutal treatment of prisoners.

It was with no pleasant thoughts that I parted with the officer who had volunteered such disagreeable information. During my short stay under his roof he had shown me every kindness, and no doubt told me what he did to put me on my guard and prepare me somewhat for the reception I was likely to meet. I was within fifteen versts of the prison over which Ivan Dimitrievitch Durakoff exercised such absolute control, and while busy with my thoughts as how best to approach the old tyrant, a mujik (peasant) suddenly appeared in the roadway, carrying in his hands a live black grouse. It flashed across my mind that it would be a good idea to secure the bird as a present to the old soldier's wife. I thought such a gift might soften the old officer's heart, for it is seldom that a black grouse is caught alive, and is therefore regarded as a curiosity. Stopping the mujik I inquired how much he would take for the bird. "Only fifteen kopekas, your honor," was the reply. So the mujik got his fifteen kopekas and I the bird.

Fortune favored me, for on reaching the station the much dreaded official was absent, and my first meeting was with his wife, into whose good graces I ingratiated myself by presenting her with the black grouse. I told her she must keep it in remembrance of a prisoner's visit to her home. I then explained to her the situation of affairs, and also related in detail my fear of being locked up by her cruel husband and the endless trouble such delay would cause me, as I was in a great hurry to reach Petersburg as quickly as possible. Mme. Anna Durakoff was a stout middle aged woman; she had kindly gray eyes and beautiful long hair. She laughed at my fears and assured that no such direful calamity as I predicted would befall me.

She replied: "You shall have three good horses for the next thirty versts; the only use I shall make of my power will be to have you arrested until dinner is ready. I am broiling nice spring chickens, and we have plenty of milk, vegetables and tea. You surely can desire nothing better, and after you have had

a good meal you can proceed on your journey. My husband is not at all the bad man people represent him to be. It is true he is strict in the discharge of duty, but withal kind hearted and generous to a fault, and you need fear no harm at his hands. Will you please be seated while I attend to the dinner?" And with a smile and a soft "excuse me," she departed.

The room in which I was seated gave evidence of considerable taste in the furnishing, notwithstanding that everything in it was old fashioned. The halls were adorned with old family portraits, while at one side of the room an ancient piano formed the chief attraction. In Russia it is not usual to carpet the floors, rugs being employed instead, but in this case the floor was simply painted, and as clean as soap and water could make it. While waiting madame's only child appeared on the scene, carrying in her arms the bird which I had just presented her mother.

The daughter, Elena, was a pretty, interesting girl of perhaps 14 years. She was very much pleased with the black grouse, calling it my miloy (my love) and in every way evincing her pleasure at the unexpected gift. I had been seated about fifteen minutes when the door suddenly opened and Officer Durakoff entered. His appearance was sufficiently fierce to make the stoutest man quail. He was a tall, powerful man, who wore his 60 years lightly. His mustache, iron gray, was heavy and fierce looking. Added to this he had dark, piercing eyes, which seemed to search the depths of your inmost soul. He was dressed in a full captain's uniform, which well became his tall, handsome form. Such was Van Dimitrievitch Durakoff, the man I so much feared and of whom I had heard such frightful things.

His appearance did not at all reassure me, and I believed him capable of all he had been accused of. He met me in a very cool, dignified manner. I explained my position to him, and begged that he would cause me no delay, but permit me to continue my journey as I had been doing. I told him I had some money with me sufficient to pay for another horse. I told him, as I had his wife, that it was absolutely necessary for me to be in Petersburg at the earliest possible moment. I had scarcely finished speaking when he shouted, in a voice of thunder: "Oh, no; that is against the law. You will have to remain here until your party arrives, which will be some days yet."

At this juncture the black grouse entered slowly from another room, seemingly as if aware of my danger, and, if possible, to assist me. Looking at the bird in astonishment, Durakoff exclaimed: "What is that?" I explained that I brought it a present to his wife. "Oh!" he said, taking my hand and shaking it, "my wife is so fond of birds, and she has never before had in her possession a live black grouse. A thousand rubles could not make her as happy as the presentation of this bird." Durakoff's whole manner had changed; so there was, after all, a soft side to his character. This man, so cruel to others, had at least a tender regard for the partner of his joys. With a smile he turned to me and said: "I think I can arrange everything in a satisfactory manner for your departure. I will see that you have fresh horses and all you require until you reach your next resting place."

He then ordered cigars and vodka to be brought, with the remark that he kept none but the best liquors. The daughter came bearing the refreshments, and at the same time to look after the bird. At my request she seated herself at the piano and played and sang some Russian songs. The bird, surprised at the unusual sound, remained perfectly motionless for some minutes, its attitude suggestive of listening, which gave it a very wise look and caused much amusement. Dinner was soon served; it was good, and being hungry I did myself justice to the tempting viands, washed down by copious draughts of vodka. Indeed, so much vodka did mine host force upon me that I soon found myself in scarcely a fit condition to continue my journey. When ready to start I caused the officer's wife much merriment by my clumsiness in getting into the tarantass.

On parting with Officer Durakoff he handed me a letter to the next etape officer, and in this wise I passed from station to station. The presentation of the black grouse saved me forty days on my journey and the discomfort of etape prison travel. When crossing Lake Ladoga I fell in with some of my



"BUT YOU CANNOT RECEIVE THE PRINCE HERE."

old acquaintances, whom I had not seen for more than five years, having spent the intervening time in exile. Among others I met the Polish Princess Brantzski; we had been good friends prior to the imprudence which cost me some of the best years of my life. She possessed considerable influence at court, and promised, if need be, to use it in my behalf.

On leaving the steamer nothing would have been easier than for me to escape, as the gendarme who accompanied me was in a beastly state of intoxication, having surrendered himself to the wiles of the very cheapest kind of vodka. It

was a sore temptation, as I had not the slightest idea of what would be done with me on reaching Petersburg. But honor forbade that I take advantage of the drunken soldier's plight; probably his life would have paid the forfeit. We reached Petersburg about 1 p. m., and calling the most respectable ishvozhchik I saw, I put my inebriated soldier in his carriage and prepared to enter myself, first asking my escort where he was to deliver me up. "To the chief of police," came in drowsy tones. So to the chief of police I ordered the driver to take us. Arriving there, we were told we must proceed to the governor of the province (gubernator), which meant another ride of over seven miles. Reaching there, we were ordered to the governor general's bureau, which was six miles distant.

It was now about 5 p. m., and I was feeling hungry, so I decided to stop at a hotel and have some dinner. This through with, we drove to the bureau of the governor general, where the clerk ordered us to the forwarding prison, distant about five miles. This I reached about 8 p. m., and was received by an officer of the guard, who opened the great iron gates leading to the prison and conducted me to the prison itself. Its appearance was the reverse of prepossessing, with its great somber walls towering toward the heavens, gloomy and forbidding, and when the key turned in the locks of the heavy iron doors it was as though some great body had been wrenched out of place, emitting groans of mortal agony. I entered and was taken up two flights of stairs to the office of the governor of the prison. He was a man of brutal aspect, short, stout, with little beaklike eyes which glittered with vengeful fire.

Scarcely deigning to notice me, he ordered me in brutal tones to pay the ishvozhchik eight rubles, which he demanded for our long drive in search of some one to whom I could deliver myself up. I replied that I had no money left wherewith to satisfy the demand, and that it was the duty of the government to see that all my expenses were paid. This exasperated the brute, and he ordered the soldier to confine me in cell No. 800. I found myself consigned to the very worst part of the prison, a place set apart for the exclusive use of the Scoptsi sect. It was a large cell on the ground floor, but so filthy and foul smelling that I could scarcely breathe. It contained no furniture. On the floor some straw had been spread, but from long use it had become black with dirt.

Tired though I felt, I could not reconcile myself to resting on it. So I brushed a space clear and, spreading my overcoat on it, slept soundly until 7 o'clock the next morning. The first sight that greeted my waking eyes were the two hangmen (palatch) working in the prison yard. They were both large, powerful men, dressed in the customary red shirt. One of them, Maximoff, had murdered his mother, and was sentenced to hard labor for life; the other, Paoloff, had brutally murdered his aged father, and had likewise received a life sentence. Both men on being admitted to prison declared their wish to become hangmen.

Their request was granted, and they are apparently happy in pursuit of their ghastly occupation. They have good food, and are allowed cigarettes and three glasses of vodka daily. They also have the privilege of selling tobacco and cigarettes to the other prisoners, making a profit of 300 per cent. in their transactions. When the gendarme entered my cell I demanded to know the reason of my being placed in such a filthy place. He replied: "The governor was displeased at your manner of speaking, and ordered you here for punishment." "Go tell your governor that I demand that he send for Prince Suwaroff, the governor general; that I have a very important state secret to communicate, one which I must tell to him and him alone."

In a few minutes the governor (brute of the previous evening) appeared at my cell door and, smiling blandly, said: "What is this state secret you wish to communicate? Make me your confidant, and I will see that you are soon a free man; you will also receive a large reward." I answered: "To Prince Suwaroff will I communicate my secret, and to him alone, and it is necessary that I see him at once." The governor remained quite half an hour, endeavoring to persuade me to communicate my knowledge to him. I was proof against all his wiles. He then said: "But you cannot receive the prince in this place. I will have you removed to a better cell." But I resolutely refused to change my quarters until I had seen the governor general. No amount of persuasion could alter my determination.

Prince Suwaroff was sent for, came to my cell and was much surprised to find an old acquaintance amid such horrible surroundings. My rise succeeded; I had no state secret to communicate, but I did have a serious complaint to make against the governor of the prison. The prince, after severely reprimanding the prison official, ordered that I be immediately conveyed to the department for politicals. It was on the third floor of the prison and possessed at least a few comforts, the greatest of which was cleanliness. The cells were large, light and airy, containing iron bedsteads and a few other necessities. Here I remained, waiting orders for the next step in an already eventful career.

Prince Suwaroff, of whom I speak, was the governor general of the province of St. Petersburg. He was one of Russia's greatest characters, and so greatly was beloved by the emperor that when death claimed him, Alexander II refused to place another in his position, but chose rather to abolish the office entirely. His kind heart and genial manner caused him to be the recipient of numerous letters from politicians, begging that he intercede with the czar on their behalf, knowing him to be the personal friend of the autocrat of Russia, and having perhaps more influence over his imperial master than any other man in the empire.

COURT NORRKOOW.
James Lester, a veteran of the war of 1812, is thought to be the oldest pensioner in Connecticut. He lives at Lyme and is in his ninety-ninth year.

ODDS AND ENDS.

There is a sunflower stalk at Hannibal, Mo., which is sixteen feet high and which contains 150 blossoms.

An English plasterer has been staggered with a fortune of £1,400,000, left to him by a clergyman who emigrated and prospered in Sydney.

A curious and interesting exhibition will be opened in Cologne on June 1, 1890, in which will be displayed an immense collection of arms, instruments, etc., serving to illustrate the art of warfare, and bearing in any way on the condition of troops or armies.

The Afghan ameer's method of vengeance on his rebel prisoners is pretty highly developed. One batch, numbering 300, were put to death three a day. One of the trio was always hanged dressed in yellow and green, another was dressed in black and blown from a gun, and the third was dressed in red and cut up with a sword.

An eccentric bibliomane who died recently in England, leaving a highly valuable library, refused to allow a book in it over a certain size, and absolutely excluded anything written either by a clergyman or a woman. They had no business with literature, in his opinion, and were incapable of achieving success in it.

A writer in The United Service Magazine says that the stones used for scrubbing the decks of ships are called "holy stones" because the work was generally done on Sunday. But a writer in The Churchman says that they were so called because those who used them had to go down on their knees to do their work.

Lieut. Schwatka estimates the number of living cliff dwellers he has discovered in southern Chihuahua at from 5,000 to 12,000. They are very wild and shy, and upon the approach of white people fly to their caves or cliffs by notched sticks placed against the face of the cliffs if too steep, although they ascend vertical stone faces if there are the slightest crevices for the fingers and toes.

A French woman invented one of the most original methods of dealing with a refractory child ever revealed to the public. She fastened on the hat of her 8-year-old daughter, who had been naughty, a placard inscribed with the words, "Mademoiselle is a thief and a liar," and walked her through the streets. It took a policeman to rescue the lady from the mobbing of an indignant crowd.

A writer in The Canada Presbyterian maintains that "it is not going too far to say that if some ministers now in their graves had heard during their lives the good things spoken of them after they were dead, they might not have died. The help given them by a little kindness might have kept them alive and in good working condition a few years longer."

Who is responsible for the misuse of the word "whiskers" in America? The word is today almost universally used instead of beard. Whiskers, correctly speaking, are only that portion of a man's facial hair which is worn on either side of his face, while the rest is shaven clean. A man with full beard cannot be said to wear whiskers. As the very name indicates, the appendages are fragments of a beard. The American barber has almost lost the art of trimming beards, they are now so little worn in this country.

One of the cannon used by the American colonists in 1783 in defending their settlements from the attacks of the Indian chief Pontiac is imbedded in the foundation walls of the residence of J. Samuel Krause, of Bethlehem, Pa., where it was placed by the officers of the Moravian church to prevent young America from firing it off on liberty days.

Professor Lankester proposes, in Nature, that this new word, "Mithridatism," be admitted to the scientific vocabulary, to signify that immunity from the effects of a poison which is induced by the administration of gradually increased doses. The selection of the word has reference to the fable concerning Mithridates, king of Pontus, that he became so charged with the poisons he experimented with, that he obtained an immunity from them all.

Annual Fairs for Paris.
Quite a novel idea, and one which certainly merits attention, was propounded at a banquet given in his honor by M. Gustave Sandoz, a member of the exhibition jury and the president of several industrial and commercial associations. The company, 150 in number, included many well known persons, and several telling speeches were delivered, the most notable of which was that of the guest of the evening. After alluding to the regret which would be felt here if the chief buildings of the Champ de Mars were demolished, M. Sandoz went on to suggest that an annual fair should be held on that favorite site on the same lines as those of Nijni Novgorod in the east and of Leipzig in the center of Europe.

M. Sandoz pointed out that in the month during which the two great fairs to which he alluded lasted, business to the amount of more than a milliard of francs was transacted. The Paris fair would be the big one of the west, and there was no doubt that foreigners, who were always glad to come to the French metropolis, would bring with them produce which, under existing conditions, native merchants were compelled to seek elsewhere—at Antwerp, Hamburg and London, for example. To this end, the Ase structures on the Champ de Mars might be utilized, and French trade would be benefited to an extent which it was scarcely possible to estimate.—London Telegraph.

Getting Even.
The seat of the bitterest hostility to the Jews has been the city of Vienna, but vengeance seems to have come upon it at last. A great event in Vienna every year has been the International grain market, the great market for the continent. Last year 6,000 persons attended it. But last spring Hebrew resentment was stirred to such a point that 250 firms of Buda-Pesth signed a declaration that they would not deal in Vienna, and the movement was supported in various towns of Hungary and in Prague. The Vienna association, seeing the dangerous extravagance to which the anti-Semitic agitation had been carried, petitioned the emperor to allay it, but the result could not be avoided. The efforts of the Jews have made the corn market of this year a comparative failure. Instead of the 6,000 merchants of 1888, there have been but 2,000, and a proposition has arisen also to establish another international corn market in Paris.—New York Sun.

A Perplexing Question.
A curious question has arisen in regard to the phonograph. It appears that the baritone, Kachmann, who was recently holiday making in Venice, sang, the romance from "Hamlet" into this novel and remarkable instrument. Mr. Coppello, Edison's Venetian representative, kept the phonogram, the baritone protesting, and even threatening legal proceedings. It would be interesting to know on what grounds the plaintiff can proceed. The laws of copyright, at any rate in this country, have not provided for any such contingency. Whether a phonographic reproduction of a song, which can, of course, be multiplied indefinitely, is the copyright of the singer, is a question which would, I fancy, perplex many a learned judge.—Stage

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